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Faceless expression

For a contemporary artist, Wang Yin seems unusually unconcerned with symbols. His minimalist paintings eschew faces to focus on figures.

His latest collection of oil paintings is on display at Tang Contemporary Art Gallery in an aptly untitled exhibition.

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Central Bank denies plan for bigger notes

By ZHAO HONGYI
Beijing Today Staff

The People's Bank of China has dismissed rumors that it is planning to issue larger bank notes later this year.

The now popular rumor has been attributed to He Zhicheng, a senior economist in the head office of Agricultural Bank of China, who said he expected the arrival of 500 and 1,000 yuan notes to offset the country's increase in incomes.

Since the day the first 100 yuan note was issued, the minimum monthly income of the average Chinese worker has increased from 50 yuan to more than 5,000 yuan. The country's higher earners net more than 100,000 yuan per month.

While prices have also shot up, the growth has been slower than reflected in the average income. The National Bureau of Statistics said China's consumer's price index (CPI) increased 2.5 percent this year.

China considers a CPI of less than 3 percent to be "low inflation."

He Zhicheng said his forecast was based on these facts. He also showed images of possible sample notes the bank was considering. In the 1,000 yuan note, a pink dragon is shown flying. The 500 yuan note is brown and shows the heads of several leaders.



Rumoured 500 and 1,000 bank notes

Deputies to the People's Congress suggested issuing larger notes several years ago

to meet economic demands and reduce the physical cost of large transactions.

Ge Hongling, a spokeswoman for the People's Bank of China, said the bank "has no plans to issue such big notes this year," citing the low CPI.

"There is no need to issue such large notes now," Ge said.

She also said the increasing acceptance of electronic and mobile payment systems are limiting the need for large notes.

At the same time, she criticized electronic payment systems for "breaking monitoring boundaries" and "being suspected of engaging in illegal operations."

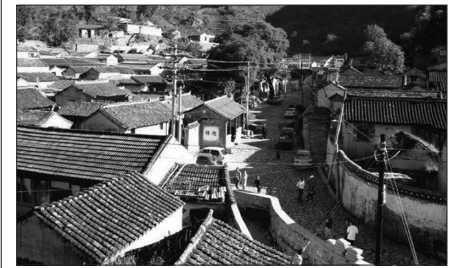
The real problem is the Central Bank's fear that big notes might accelerate inflation, said Zhao Xijun, professor of finance from the Renmin University of China.

But supporters said many countries have issued larger notes in their economic rapid development. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sweden, Norway, Hungary and Denmark all offer currency in large denominations.

China appears to be following the US, which also issues its currency in increments of 1, 5, 10, 50 and 100.

China's M2 currency supply has grown to 120 trillion yuan from less than 20 trillion yuan at the beginning of reforms more than 30 years ago.

Old villages get facelift



Ancient buildings are commonly seen in the outskirts of Beijing.

Photo by BQB

By ZHAO HONGYI
Beijing Today Staff

Beijing is preparing to renovate and restore five "traditional villages" in celebration of the ninth annual Cultural Heritage Day on June 15.

The villages were selected from a two-year survey of 52 villages in 13 districts, according to Beijing Municipal Relics Association.

Selected villages include the villages of Shuiyu in Fangshan District, Longwan in Shunyi District and Jiaozhuang, Lingshui and Cuandixia in Mentougou District.

The Relics Reserve Bureau has asked several experienced relic and folk culture preservationists to assist in the planning and construction.

"We want to preserve these historic buildings as a tool to teach future generations how ancient people would live and work," said Wang Yuwei, director of the Municipal Relics Reservation Bureau.

Renovation is already underway in Shuiyu, a village with many structures dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. The 10-square-kilometer village has many old millstones, flagpoles and ancient business roads.

Structures to be preserved include homes and business centers, as well as a few craft houses, said Guo Zihua, director of the Municipal Commission of Rural Affairs. The preservation efforts is based on the Guidelines for the Preservation of Beijing's Historical Buildings.

Shuiyu is the site of Beijing's Wen and Luoguo'er bridges, which are decorated with carved white stones with inscriptions intended to ward off floods. The 100 old buildings shortlisted for preservation have 520 rooms arranged in traditional courtyards. Though most are dilapidated, the stone foundations provide a guide to their original appearance.

"This ancient village is beautiful, but it has been buried by the forest for a long time," Guo said. "Some buildings have already been lost since our first survey in 2012."

Cuandixia is equally famous for its old buildings. It was discovered years ago by tourists who were taken by its unique arrangement and high walls.

In Jiaozhuang, networks of tunnels underground connect every corner of the village. The tunnels were dug as a defense in advance of the Japanese invasion.

Tombs vanish from Haidian village

By ZHAO HONGYI
Beijing Today Staff

After two decades of visiting his parents' tombs in Gaozhuang, Liu Genshui was stunned to learn they have been removed.

"My father died and was buried here in 1985. My mother followed in 1996," said Liu, 67. "Now the cemetery is gone."

He can only point to the general area where his parents had been buried.

More than 24 tombs of 18 families have been removed from the village cemetery, located on the northeast corner of a stretch of land west of Changqingyuan Road in Haidian District.

The cemetery sits on a lot that has been leased to a number of property developers during the last decade. It is currently held by Jinhui Travel Agency, which operates a used car dealership on the land according to records supplied by the Civil Affairs Section of Sijiqing Town.

Jihui has been negotiating the tomb removals for several years but failed to reach an agreement on how to compensate surviving family members. Its last offer was several thousand yuan or the paid movement of the tombs to another location.

The cemetery and surrounding land was cleared to expand the parking lot for Jihui's car dealership, an employee of the travel agency said.

Shi Touying, another Gaozhuang vil-



Many villagers have lost their family tombs.

CFP Photo

lager, said most of the tombs were removed around May 25.

"We came to pay our respected during the Qingming Festival earlier this year. Everything was still normal then," he said.

"The tombs are a symbol of the village and the way they remember their ancestors," said Ma Guangyu, an attorney at the Shengting Law Office.

Ma argued that as a pre-existing legal structure, the lease holder had no rights to clear the cemetery without the villagers' consent, and that the demolition could be an infringement of their property rights.

Villagers may be entitled to compensa-

tory damages.

But Ma also advised the villagers whose family tombs remain to move their ancestors to a registered cemetery.

Property developers are grabbing more land from the dead in recent years.

Last year in Deng County, Henan Province, the local government issued a notice asking local people to remove the tombs of their ancestors from the fields. The local government ultimately sent trolley buses to grab the tombs.

While urban residents have few options other than cremation, burial remains a common practice in the countryside.

Agricultural e-vendors bleed cash amid boom

By BAO CHENGRONG
Beijing Today Staff

Viewed from the outside, Chinese agricultural e-commerce platforms have been enjoying years of staggering boom. More than 30,000 platforms have shot up in the last three years alone, 3,000 of which deal in farm-fresh produce.

But in spite of this staggering growth, a majority of them are losing money.

2011 saw a wave of closures as many of the top agricultural e-commerce merchants closed their websites. The most famous casualty was Ximi.com.

Huang Gang, director of the Supply Chain Management Union, blames the merchants' failure on a misunderstanding of their customers. Huang said many markets were using traditional e-commerce platform tactics to woo their customers rather than focusing on the stories behind their products.

Without a connection to the farm, the harvest experience and the supply chain, shoppers failed to form an emotional connection to the market, he said.

But it's just as likely that the platforms missed their target. Old shoppers buy mainly based on price, making it extremely hard to turn a profit.

Frequent low-volume orders crushed the logistics of the industry. Customers who ordered less than 200 yuan actually caused the platforms to lose money on Ximi.com, the average order was only 40 yuan.

Logistics costs can make or break an e-business. Liu Yuan, founder of Ximi.com, built the logistics and storage



network on his own and promised to deliver products to customers within 2 hours. But on days with more than 300 orders, the delivery network buckled.

Seasonal conditions and variation in harvest size also amplified the cost of operation.

Among the surviving e-commerce platforms, several have found a good solution to their with homegrown logistics systems.

Sfbest.com has a network that allows it to send lychee fruits of south China to Beijing and the mutton of Inner Mongolia to Hainan. E-commerce giant Alibaba has also built a cold chain logistic system capable of moving 80,000 orders for American cherries to China.

JD.com, which uses a terminal distribution service, plans to expand into agricultural sales. The business will cover all after-sale service, including purchase, storage, distribution and marketing.

The closure of Ximi.com illustrated that it's easier to profit selling nuts and dry goods than fresh fruits. The company's deci-

sion to expand from nuts to fruits caused the waste spiral that led to its death. The popularity of Three Squirrels seems to confirm the fact. In only 65 days of operations, the store has leapt to the top position on Tmall.com with a daily sales volume of 7.66 million yuan.

Huang said the rate of product returns is also an important performance index for agricultural merchants. The loss brought by the return of purchase is not simply a loss of goods, but of a customer's shopping experience and reputation.

While most e-commerce platforms have a return rate of 6 to 10 percent, creative models that require advance payment can help drive the rate to less than 1 percent.

Chen Liang, a senior researcher at Alibaba, said product positioning is equally important. The reason that Tootoo.cn has survived while Yoochai.com collapsed is because one sold high-end products while the other sold fair price products.

But Tootoo.cn's service area is limited to Sixth Ring Road, and freight orders cost 20 to 30 yuan.

Chen also mentioned that solving distrust is important. Several tea merchants on Taobao have had success by packing their products with a card naming the producer and harvest date so that customers can investigate the production process.



CFP Photos

Wang Yin changing the rules of contemporary art



Dancing in a Group, oil on canvas

By ZHAO HONGYI
Beijing Today Staff

Wang Yin's oil painting exhibition at Tang Contemporary Art Gallery reflects the trends of China's current generation of master painters.

The works on display are arranged by topic and reflect Wang's creations from 2009 to 2014. Many have gone through incremental revisions over the years as Wang learns more about life and love.

Wang's work, especially his self-portraits, reduce figures to the bare essentials. One of them features a figure in a Japanese kimono chatting with the painter who is list in his work.

Other paintings focus on the minorities of southwest China. Wang has painted a number of young girls dancing and singing showing, though none ever

show their faces.

That lack of faces defines Wang's artistic pursuit.

"There are just too many elements that go into any work. I think I've shown enough. Rather than focus on the details of facial expression I would prefer to show what my figures are doing," Wang said.

He has also done away with exhibition cards, calling them "useless reading."

"The latest generation of artists just had too many labels to show off. They had so many that they forgot to show their real works," Wang said.

Through revisions of his work, Wang's style has gradually become more sophisticated. Each time he adds something, be it a new figure or a common object.

"Life is the accumulation of experience. I can't stand leaving something looking exactly the way it

Photos provided by Tang Contemporary Art

did before," he said.

In "Beidao and Yang Feiyun's depicts a barefoot poet in front of ground. His interaction with the other the focus of the painting. His female ture muted backgrounds that draw a models lying on a bed.

Unlike most exhibitions, Wang's has

"We have too many labels for t didn't want to add another by nami tion," he says.

Wang was born in 1964 in Jinan, S ince. He graduated from the Central A atre in 1988. In the decades since, Wa the changes in Chinese contemporary tinuation of trends in Soviet Union.

He currently lives and works in Beij

Q&A with Wang Yin

Q: What are you trying to express through your works?

A: The daily life of individuals. But an individual has many faces whether busy with work, daily tasks or leisure.

Q: You seem to be trying to simplify the faces in your works while keeping them prominent. Do you think you have achieved your purpose?

A: It all depends on what the visitors think. I have done what I think is right.

Q: Do you believe that a person can be reduced to one face?

A: Definitely not. But if we focus on one side of their face and fate it can be a helpful tool to understand them.

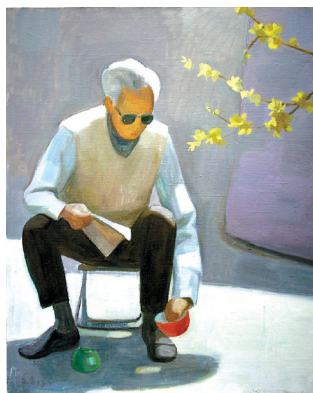
Tang Contemporary Art Gallery

Where: Gate No 2, 798 Factory, Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Through June 30

Tel: 5978 9610

Web: tangcontemporary.com



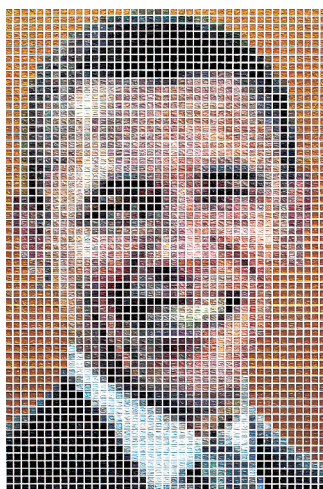
Spring Comes, oil on canvas



Barefoot Painter, oil on canvas



On the Train, oil on canvas



Barack Obama, mosaic

Mosaic artist woos public for recognition

By ZHAO HONGYI

Beijing Today Staff

Tao Na is aggressively trying to create a name for herself in the world of design. She is famous for using bricks, lights and pixel designs to craft outstanding mosaic, which she incorporate into interior designs.

Since finishing her degree in architecture at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2004, Tao has won a number of international design contests.

Like many women her age, Tao pursues love and beauty. Her walls are decorated with portraits of famous people and a mosaic of ceramic. Among the famous faces are Elizabeth Taylor, Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin.

Tao focuses on the scenes of life, such as family gatherings and lovers sharing a kiss. At the opening of her solo exhibition, she used laser lights to create a giant diamond in the space of the exhibition hall.

Her artistic language is one that will be familiar to many young Chinese, and much of the context comes from a careful understanding of visitor traffic through the exhibition space.

In the painting section, her series titled "Beautiful World" interacts with viewers using abstract and concrete language. The solo exhibition also includes "Tian Jue," one of her works exhibited at the Venice Biennale to much acclaim.

Tao labels herself as a "sincere visual art worker." Like Wang Yin, she is trying to create beautiful worlds in her mind.

In preparing for this exhibition, Tao and her curator Zhao Li collected her thoughts from 2008 to 2014 and selected works to best represent the time span. Arranged thusly, viewers can get some clue what Tao Na might be planning next.

The exhibition at SZ Art Center is Tao's third solo display since 2000. Her work has appeared in more than 60 group exhibitions around the world, won seven domestic awards and 13 Chinese patents. Her work has been displayed at the Contemporary Art Center of Europe, Chinese Contemporary Art Center, Museum in Taizhong (Taiwan Island), the Venice Biennale, MOMA in Moscow and Asia Art Museum in Paris.

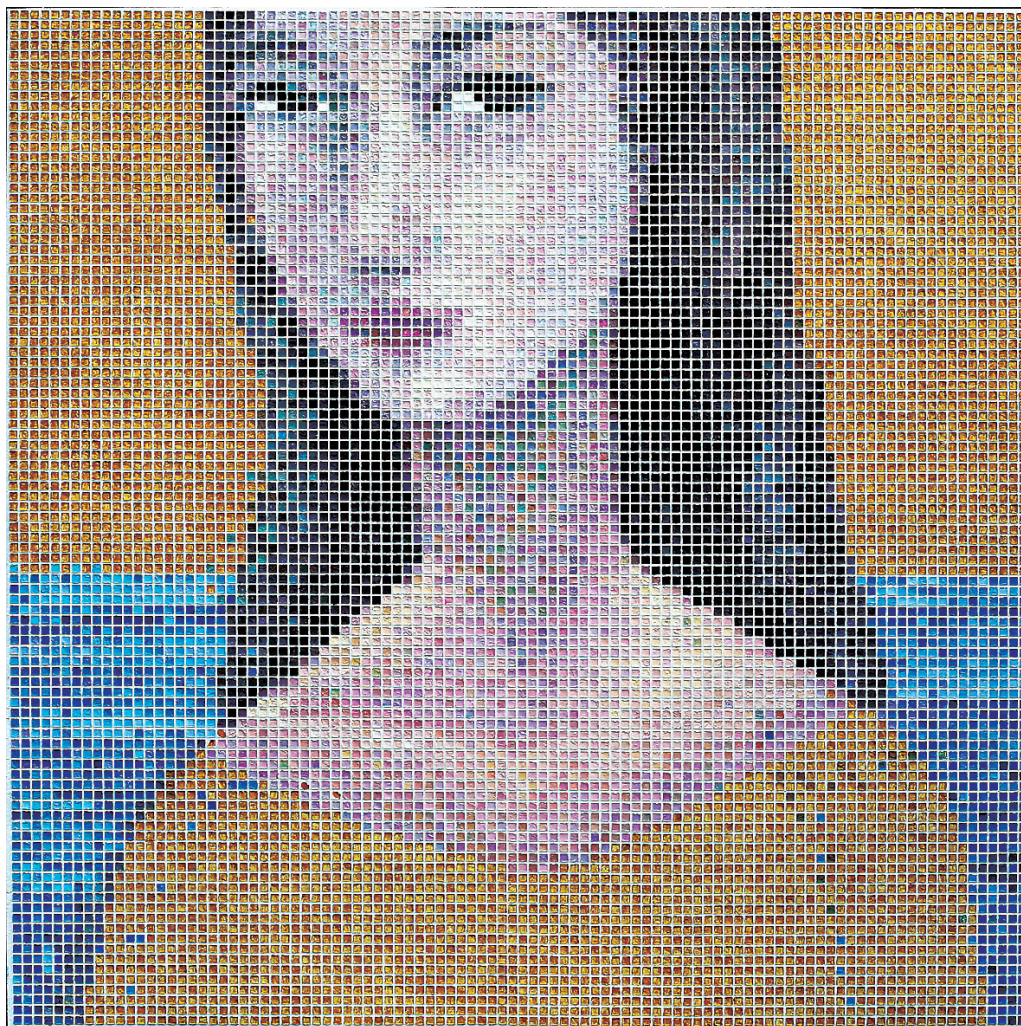
SZ Art Center

Where: 798 Art Zone, Jiuxianqiao Lu, No2-4, Chaoyang District

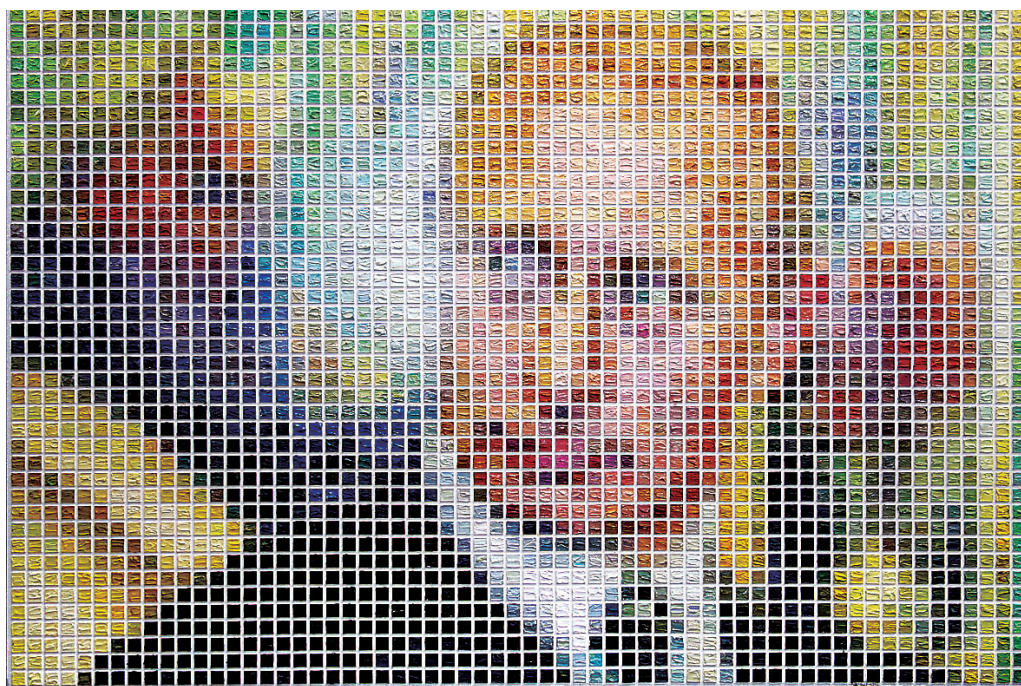
When: Through July 5

Tel: 5978 9213

Web: szartcenter.com



Golden Venice, mosaic



Vladimir Putin, mosaic

Photos provided by SZ Art Center

rary Art Center

Model," Wang
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'Porn judges' employed to scrub the Web

By DIAO DIAO
Beijing Today Intern

China may be the only country where "porn judge" is an actual government job title.

The army of specialized judges, first created in 2010, has the occasionally cringe-worthy job of watching every allegedly pornographic video that comes under the government's radar to decide which meets the Chinese definition of porn.

These judges, the government says, have the sacred task of returning the Internet to a clean and safe state.

Whether such a state has ever existed is debatable, given porn's relationship with technology dates back to the teleprinter.

But as more pornographic pop-ups encroach on Chinese Web space, parents are complaining about the effect the digital environment is having on their children.

"Sometimes you don't know what you

clicked on when one of those pictures or clips jumps out of the screen," says Zhao Suhong, the mother of a middle school boy. "Someone must think of the children and fix this."

Zhao blames pornography for the nation's rise in sex crimes.

In spite of their moniker, porn judges have more executive than judicial power. Most are employed within the police system and are assigned to pore over the DVDs snatched from vendors or hard disks seized from suspected sex offenders.

Whether possession of a pornographic video constitutes a criminal offense is entirely up to the sensibilities of the judge.

"It's a job that comes with both psychological and physical pressures,"

said Zhang Ning and Wang

Dong, leaders of a police

porn unit in Zhejiang

Province. "Our judgment on a video will

decide people's fate, so we have to be careful."

Many porn judges are

expected to work late nights,



Porn judges are wiping out unhealthy pictures and videos from the Internet.

being called in to view videos as late as 3 am. All are required to be married.

Porn judges are also employed in the private sector.

Private porn judges can earn as much as 200,000 yuan per year. Applicants are expected to be familiar with the genres of porn produced in each country, as well as Chinese law. A recent recruitment noticed required applicants to explain why CCTV censors the statue of David and the video grading systems of the US, European Union and Japan.

Most private porn judges are employed by

Security Union, an Internet monitoring organization that cooperates with provincial governments to watch more than 800 websites.

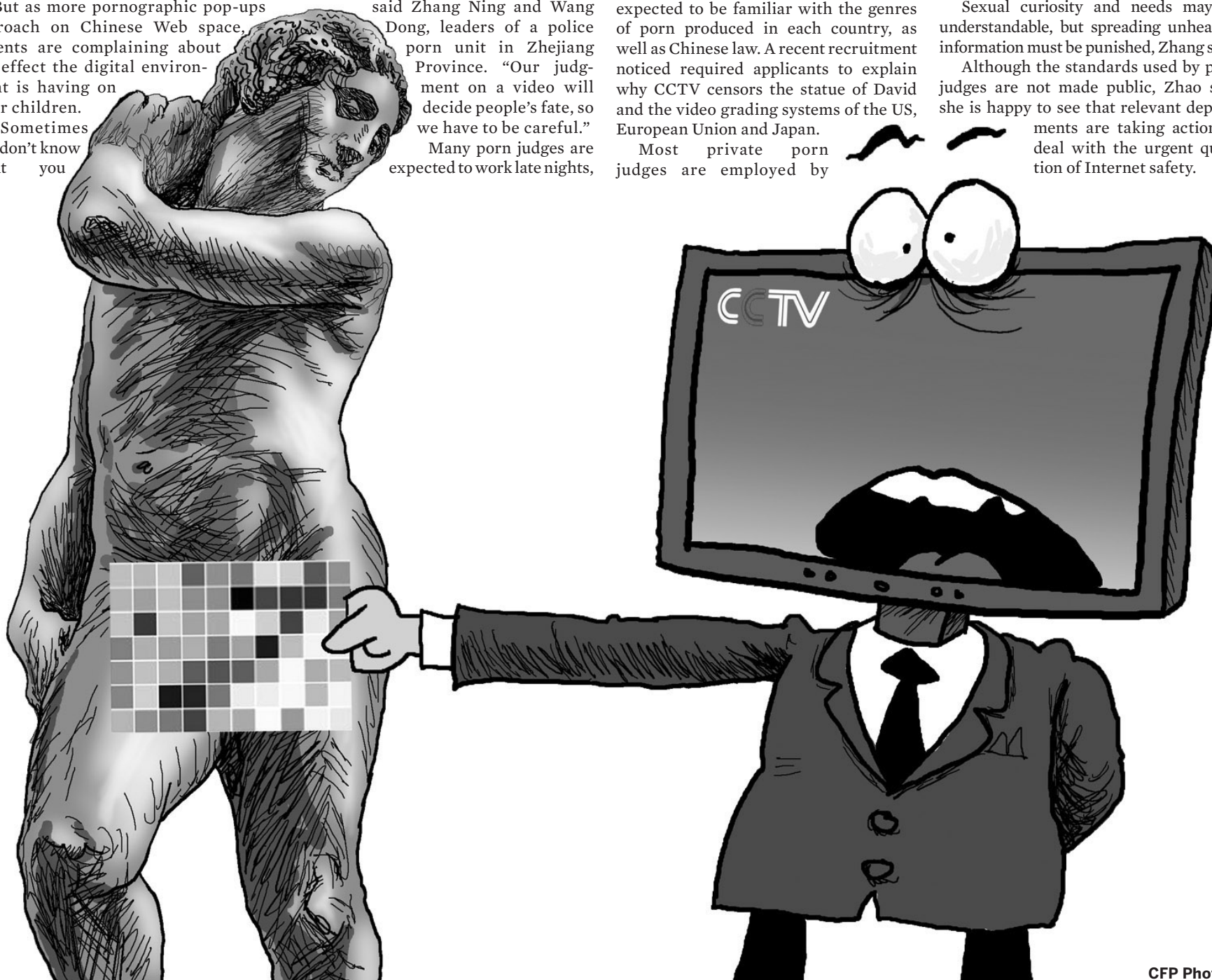
There are also volunteer porn judges with the Beijing Internet Association. More than 3,000 men and women volunteer their time, scouring the Internet for "unhealthy" pictures or video clips. Suspected video are reported to the association for further analysis.

Ye Hen, a volunteer porn judge, said it's embarrassing for young children when such images suddenly appear on their screen.

While the job may seem suspect, proponents argue that it is "necessary in a traditional country like China," and especially so in a society eager to create a "better Internet environment for teens."

Sexual curiosity and needs may be understandable, but spreading unhealthy information must be punished, Zhang says.

Although the standards used by porn judges are not made public, Zhao says she is happy to see that relevant departments are taking action to deal with the urgent question of Internet safety.





Flip-flop fashion

By DIAO DIAO
Beijing Today Intern

Flip-flops are the most popular sandals in summer. The clacking sound they make when walking speaks to anyone seeking a carefree lifestyle.

Although podiatrists warn that wearing flip-flops for too long can be hard on the joints, many people believe they can assist in weight loss.

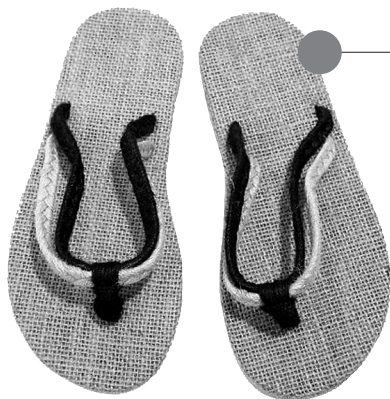
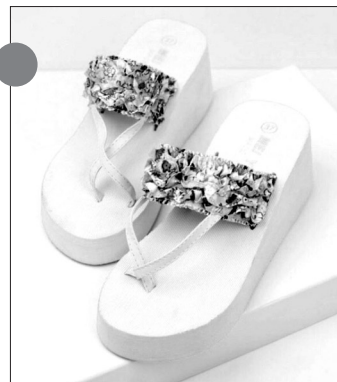
The sandals first rose to popularity in Brazil and spread from there to the beaches of Hawaii. In addition to traditional materials such as wood and straw, flip-flops are available in modern foam, rubber and organic materials.

Bohemian flip-flops

Colorful Bohemian styles have been in for the past few years. These flip-flop are light green and light yellow with floral patterns on the strap. The crossing of wide and narrow straps looks attractive. The heel is high enough for walking in the rain and comfortable to wear.

Price: 20 yuan

Web: meilishuo.com



Flax flip-flops

Flax was one of the first plant fibers used for clothing. It excels at absorbing sweat and is hypoallergenic. This pair of flip-flop is made of flax. The rope is hand-made and the soft cotton between the toes is guaranteed not to frizzle.

Price: 39 yuan

Web: vancl.com



Canvas flip-flops

Canvas shoes are popular with people of all ages. They absorb sweat and are very durable. This pair of flip-flops is designed to look like canvas sneakers. They seem especially popular with women and have sold thousands. The laces are just for decoration: you put them on using a zipper at the back.

Price: 120 yuan

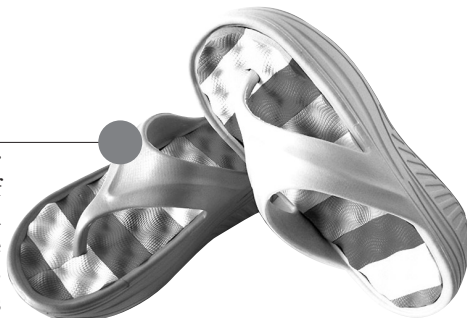
Web: meilishuo.com

Rainbow flip-flops

Rainbow colors are great for summer. These flip-flops are made of plastic, so they are light to wear and durable enough for long walks. The special arc of the sole fits the foot perfectly. The plastic protects your soles when it rains and the wave-like surface stimulates acupressure points while you walk.

Price: 39 yuan

Web: vancl.com



Knit flip-flops

The simple and clean design of this pair of flip-flops is popular with women in their mid-20s. The flower-shaped woolen strap is handmade. The black and white color scheme makes it suitable for mature ladies, and it pairs well with a long floral-print dress.

Price: 65 yuan

Web: meilishuo.com



Dog flip-flops

These cute flip-flops look like a dog. There is even a tail at the back of each shoe. The heel is neither too high nor too flat. They might appeal to shoppers looking to take their cuteness to the next level.

Price: 60 yuan

Web: meilishuo.com



Photos by vancl.com & meilishuo.com

Meat-free meals

By DIAO DIAO

Beijing Today Intern

With more and more vegetarian restaurants popping up in Beijing it's no surprise that people are preparing to take their animal protection efforts to the next level.

Vegan dining, a kind of vegetarianism that shuns all animal-related products including meat and dairy, has arrived in Beijing. There are several restaurants that excel at creating animal-free creations. The Veggie Table is one of the best.

Most of the vegan cuisine is styled after East Asian specialties. The dishes taste amazing, and the interior is designed to resemble a traditional Chinese home.

There are also vegan sandwiches made with pita bread, spaghetti with beans and other vegan desserts and drinks at The Veggie Table. The restaurant serves an afternoon tea set, so it can be a great place to relax with your friends.



Beet salad



Mushroom burger



Vegan pizza



Pita sandwich



Organic coleslaw

Hummus

The Veggie Table declares its hummus is the "best in Beijing." The pureed chickpeas come topped with olive oil and red pepper. The thick but not greasy taste and strong fragrance are what diners like the most. Hummus tastes salty and is best paired with a main course.

Price: 25 yuan

Beet Salad

Beet salads are a purplish red and come surrounded by minced organic greens. It's made of beetroots and tastes soft and sweet. Few people like to eat raw beetroots, but this salad will cater to picky tastes. It has a natural taste and strong fragrance. The salad comes topped with walnuts.

Price: 27 yuan

Organic Coleslaw

Similar to the beet salad in shape, organic coleslaw is appreciated for its thick classic taste and minced vegetables. Carrots, cucumbers and other ingredients are cut into small pieces, which tastes different than bigger chunks. Salad dressing is poured evenly over the vegetables. The fresh taste is really cool in summer.

Price: 25 yuan

Mushroom Burger

Mushroom burgers are served in a large portion suitable for two women. The bun is made of wholegrain bread and topped with nuts. The "meat patty" inside is made of mushrooms but tastes like meat. There are also minced green vegetables and tomatoes in the burger with some sliced onion. French fries and a vegetable salad are served beside the burger.

Price: 68 yuan

Vegan Pizza

Vegan pizza is made of locally sourced organic flour. It is not as complex as Italian pizza, being topped with onions, shredded eggplant and sun-dried tomato paste. It's a bit sweet and salty.

Price: 65 yuan

The Veggie Table

When: 3-10 pm

Where: 19 Jia, Wudaoyinghutong, Dongcheng District

Tel: 6446 2073

Hummus

Photos by dianping.com